4th February 2021

**Keeping in touch 4**

**Parents’ Evening**

Thank you for your avid booking of appointments. The teachers will now schedule Zoom or telephone calls according to your requested time. Please look out for an email if you requested a Zoom consultation. Please remember to be available for your consultation time on Monday or Tuesday, and that you may receive a ‘no caller id’ phone call. Please pick up; it will be us! Teachers will be reassuring all parents that they do not need to worry about their children being under pressure to ‘catch up’. All children have experienced the same terrible disruption to their learning over two academic years now. Our view at Russell is that we will work to ‘catch children up’ to their age-related expectations according to the grid below:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Current age of children:** | **Aim to be at least ‘age-related’:** |
| Year R/FS and Y1 children | By the end of Year 2 |
| Year 2 and Year 3 children | By the end of Year 4 |
| Year 4 children | By the end of Year 6 (end of KS2) in transition with Alameda and Woodlands/next schools |

We will not ‘panic’ or rush to do this just in this academic year, as this would put far too much pressure on the children. We are all for high expectations, but those have to be realistic and avoid inducing anxiety in anyone. In future letters, I will set out more about further iterations of our ‘Recovery Curriculum’ and plans to spend government ‘catch up money’ that has been promised.

**CHUMS – Shine Bright. Wear Bright. Express Yourself – Friday 5th February**

Sadly nowadays, 1 in 10 children has a diagnosable mental health disorder – that’s roughly 3 children in every classroom!

We are taking part in the CHUMS mental health and well-being week (1st to 7th February).

An assembly based on: shine bright, wear bright, express yourself has already ‘aired’, PSHRE lessons and 'Shine Bright, Wear Bright Friday' will also take place this week. **Please encourage your child to wear their brightest clothes on Friday (non-uniform in school) to support this theme.** If you would like to donate to CHUMS, there is a link below for both further information and for donations. Children in school can still bring money in and we will donate it on their behalf. Thank you in advance for your support.

**More information:**

<https://chumscharity.org/event/shine-bright-wear-bright-2021/>

**To donate:**

<https://chumscharity.org/donate/>

As you know, we also took part in the CIN '5 to Thrive' in November which was a whole themed day and assembly too.  Further information and resources can still be found here:

<https://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/schools/primary-school/five-to-thrive-hub/>

We felt having an on-going focus on mental health and well-being during the whole year was perhaps even more important than ever, considering the situation we currently find ourselves in.

CHUMS are also running a ‘creative’ competition, which closes on the 29th March. If you would like your child to join in with this, please find the details attached.

Please do look at our website ‘Pastoral Support’ Tab, in ‘Useful resources and books.’ We have lots of resources to help with mental health, anxiety and well-being:

* Wheel of well-being (used with all staff and children at Russell and based on international research)
* Anxiety CHUMS leaflet to give you practical strategies to support children
* Mindfulness helps mental well-being resource sheet. Simple, everyday strategies to support children and adults

In addition, Central Bedfordshire have also created a Mental Health Week resource. This is attached to this email too.

**The PTA**

I am absolutely delighted that at the PTA AGM we were able to form a new committee and even see some brand new faces! Thank you to all the new members of the committee, both with named roles and without, we really do appreciate all your support and hard work! I would like to thank both Amy Galt and Lucienne Mann for their tireless and enthusiastic work last year chairing the PTA. What a year to become the Chairs! We really appreciate the whole PTA teams’, hard work and money raising over the last year. Yet again it has added a staggering amount to the school budget to benefit all of the children in many varied ways – not least: new Ipads, hundreds of books, Christmas treats, pantos and gifts, and the outdoor gym over the last 12 months! So much was achieved in such difficult circumstances and we are incredibly grateful to them. We look forward to working with Sarah and Grace (the new Chairs) and the rest of the PTA team again this year.

**Remote learning survey – have you had your say yet?**

On Friday last week, Mrs Bunney wrote to all parents thanking you all for your incredible support with remote learning and asking for your views on our ‘offering’. Thank you to the hundreds of you who have already done this! We have learnt the following so far (and it is all brilliant news!):

93% of you feel the aspect that helps most with the learning is live lessons and ‘feeling connected’

89% of you feel the amount of work is about right most of the time

89% of you are managing to attend the live lessons (or access recordings) most days

86% of you feel that the work is ‘pitched correctly’, with 9% saying ‘too easy’ and 5% ‘too hard

These are just our initial ‘headlines’. I will write to you with more detailed information once we have completed the survey. In the meantime, if you have not yet had the chance to have your say, please do complete the Google Form below by Friday 5th February. Your feedback will help us to make appropriate changes to our provision.

Again, I just want to take the opportunity to say what an amazing job you’re doing supporting your child’s wellbeing and learning during this time. We know it is hard, but you are being phenomenal. Thank you!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdNFwOQHxCgCHyh3vc5APbMDYaOXGf7hiQQX6Ak_goUCpxKOQ/viewform?usp=sf_link>

**Assemblies:**

This week’s assembly – (Already posted) Shine Bright. Wear Bright. Express Yourself – Mrs Walker

Next week’s assembly – (Available on Google Classroom from Tuesday 9th from 9am) – Mrs Bunney – Values - Courage

**Safer Internet Day – 9th February 2021**

The theme for next week's internet safety day is 'An internet we trust: exploring reliability in the online world'. The internet has an amazing range of information and opportunities online, but how do we separate fact from fiction and keep everyone safe?
We are very aware of how much technology the children are now using and the influence this is having on their behaviour and motivation particularly. For now, it is simply unavoidable so we need to use it as safely as we can.

Staff will be leading activities with children next week, but you might also like to look at the following:

Safer Internet Day 2021: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2021>

Resources available: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

A guide to social media for parents and young people that gives apps a rating as well as lots of other resources and guides. <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

If you would like any further information about keeping your child safe on-line, please look at the website under the E-Safety tab.

**LAST CALL - REMINDER - Stress and Well-being Workshop for parents**

Over 30 parents have already signed up for this. Great news! It is an hour and a half full of practical top tips and strategies to use to cope with these extremely tough times, and particularly stress and anxiety. This will be held virtually on **Thursday 4th March between 6 and 7:30pm**. Approximately 2 weeks before this, the NHS will send you a very short well-being questionnaire to support the event. None of this will be referred to in the workshop**. If you would like to take part, please complete one Google Form for each parent wanting to attend**. You will need to provide us with your name and an email address which can be used to send you the questionnaire 2 weeks before and to send you the virtual event link. **This workshop is totally FREE** and covers content that the NHS currently provide but have a HUGE waiting list for. Please do take advantage of this if you feel it would be of benefit by **completing the Google Form** by no later than **Wednesday 10th February**:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdrLSTkuc7oLhr4J7FkGFucQBvwCPFrsOQjBV7p38puwlhjbQ/viewform?usp=sf_link>

Please do take care and stay safe and well.

Many thanks and kind regards,

Nicki Walker

Headteacher